

City of Saint Paul - Department of Safety and Inspections

2007-2009 Strategic Planning Goals and Strategies

Executive Summary

The Department of Safety and Inspections' (DSI) 2007-2009 Strategic Plan was initially crafted by the Senior Management Team of the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) after soliciting input from all employees of DSI. The Senior Management Team identified ten (10) strategic goals which comprise the DSI 2007-2009 Strategic Plan.

The strategic goals are reflective of DSI's efforts to become an effective and efficient merged safety and inspections Department. A number of the identified goals clarify the role DSI plays in achieving the City's strategic goals, as noted throughout the Plan. Building internal and external ownership is a critical component of the Strategic Plan. Therefore, before finalizing the Department's 2007-2009 Strategic Plan, internal and external stakeholders were offered the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the Plan elements. Their comments and ideas were incorporated into the final document.

- Prevent Life and Property Loss
- Promote Neighborhood Safety
- Stress Citizen Education and Communication
- Promote Sustainable Urban Living
- Enhance the Spirit of Our City
- Unify DSI Systems and Structure
- Clarify Operational Standards, Policies, and Procedures
- Establish DSI's Human Resource Systems
- Promote Technology Solutions
- Address Co-Location Issues

Who We Are

A proactive, multi-disciplinary safety and inspections organization that builds and maintains a livable, Saint Paul community through strong leadership, creative partnerships, teamwork, and effective regulatory strategies.

Vision

To be the leader in creating the safest, healthiest, most livable, and vibrant City in America.

Mission

To preserve and improve the quality of life in Saint Paul by protecting and promoting public health and safety for all.

Our Values:

- Serve our customers with respect and dignity.
- Act with integrity and professionalism in all interactions with our customers and the public at large.
- Commit and dedicate ourselves to public service.
- Embrace the diversity of our City and our organization, valuing different viewpoints, expertise, and cultures.

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DSI's Ten Strategic Goals

Eventually, eleven (11) strategic goals were adopted by the Senior Management Team, reflecting feedback received from DSI employees, internal, and external stakeholders regarding the draft strategic plan. The adopted strategic goals include multiple issues to be addressed as critical elements of a viable, livable City and components of a successful merger and transition process.

Goal #1: Prevent Life and Property Loss

DSI's Strategies:

1. Use the Vacant Building Program as a strategic approach to neighborhood rejuvenation. (A)

- Rehabilitate buildings versus demolish buildings.

2. Sustain economic investment through Fire inspections, e.g., burned buildings are rarely re-built. (B)

3. Maintain efforts to prevent life and property loss. (B)

- Maintain or reduce insurance rates in the City.
- Request the Insurance Services Office (ISO) to produce annual data to be used as the measurement.
- Explore methods to increase use of fire sprinklers.

4. Use and adopt historic preservation tools to strengthen the role of preservation in economic development. (A)

- Adopt a new preservation ordinance to strengthen the City's role in safeguarding and reusing historic structures.
- Establish a program for and complete a cultural resources survey of the "Invest Saint Paul" areas within eighteen (18) months.
- Manage and complete a Historic Preservation Plan that will be adopted as a chapter of the City's comprehensive Plan within eighteen (18) months.
- Continue to review changes within historical districts and for historic sites that preserve a neighborhood's unique characteristics.
 - Increase the survey and designation process and identify new districts and sites eligible for local designation.
 - Continue to review infrastructure improvements in historic districts to insure the historic character is maintained.
 - Continue to place historic district signs in new and existing districts to identify the area as a place of significance.

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5. Improve skyway accessibility and governance. (B)

- Ensure proper maintenance of skyways in the downtown area.
- Improve access to skyways.
- Provide “way find” signage for skyway system that is consistent throughout skyway system.
- Involve and partner with building owners to achieve results.

Critical Success Factors: *How Will We Know If We Are Successful?*

- Increase the number of rehabilitated versus demolished vacant buildings over the next ten years.
- Eliminate fatalities in Fire and Building Code C of O buildings.
- Maintain or decrease dollars of fire loss annually.
- Reduce the number of complaints regarding skyway system using Visitor and Convention Bureau data.
- Increase the number of designated historical structures in the City.
- Receive positive feedback from neighborhoods about efforts.
 - Conduct a neighborhood survey to solicit data.
- Use Fire data to show success.

Note: Supports City Goal #3: Expanding Economic Opportunity.

Note: Supports City Goal #5: Quality Infrastructure.

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Goal #2: Promote Neighborhood Safety

DSI's Strategies:

1. Ensure compliance coordination within DSI. (A)

- Identify what can be handled more effectively and efficiently with fewer inspections.
- Cross train inspectors; provide both awareness-level training and training to meet the identified business needs of DSI.
- Empower staff to act; support and hold staff accountable.
- Partner with police on behavior issues related to inspections.
- Emphasize enforcement in the Right of Way.
- Ensure that effective meetings with appropriate staff are held to address coordination issues.
- Ensure the consistency of message among Divisions.

2. Use the expanded Vacant Buildings Program to address issues of safe homes and safe streets. (A)

- Monitor and secure vacant buildings to improve quality of life and ensure life safety for residents.
- Serve as a catalyst for resolving or eliminating problems by improving or razing properties.
- Conduct awareness training regarding the Vacant Building Program.
- Explore seizing property for future use versus demolishing viable buildings.
- Conduct research to determine if a vacant building fee charge is made and how the program works.

3. Expand the Fire Certificate of Occupancy Program. (A)

- Create a comprehensive, proactive Program.
- Focus resources where resources are most needed – “C” properties.
- Emphasize and focus resources where Fire casualties are most likely to occur, which is the home.
- Coordinate the Fire Certificate of Occupancy with other DSI Programs to address health and quality-of-life issues.
- Establish an incentive-driven system to reward proactive property owners for maintaining their property through reduced fees and reduced inspection frequency.
- Use the case-management approach to realize better results in multi-disciplinary inspections.

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4. Continue primary property maintenance function. (A)

- Promote regulatory consistency across the entire City – neighborhood to neighborhood.
- Protect the public by addressing nuisance complaints.
- Take a proactive approach to address graffiti issues throughout the City by streamlining the graffiti process to address growing issue.
- Utilize the case-management approach to prevent or reduce repeat problem properties.
- Support neighborhood partnerships, e.g., provide leadership in conducting “Neighborhood Sweeps.”
- Clarify the difference between over-occupied and illegal occupancy and enforce consistently.
- Participate in “Walk, Talk, and Take Action” events in targeted neighborhoods as a way to connect staff, neighborhoods, and policy makers.

5. Improve DSI’s relationship with neighborhoods through zoning and site plan review. (A)

- Be watchful of negative impact on neighborhoods, e.g., traffic flow, gun shops, and liquor establishments.
- Look for ways to improve the Zoning Code legislation to allow DSI to support the community at large.
- Promote Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Guidelines through various means.
- Incorporate Heritage Preservation Guideline considerations in the Plan Review process.

6. Inspect to the Minnesota State Building Code. (A)

- Ensure buildings are constructed to Code and final inspections are done in cooperation with other DSI Divisions.
- Maintain the safety of rental properties through the Fire Certificate of Occupancy Program.
- Check to determine if construction permits, where needed, have been issued when conducting building and trade inspections.
- Conduct awareness-level training that includes erosion control guidelines.
- Establish policies and procedures for when occupancy of a building has occurred without either Fire or Building C of Os having been approved.
- Problem solve ways to conduct a “check off” on a permit placard, showing what trade permits are required and obtained.

7. Increase animal control program in the City. (B)

- Review legislation to determine what additional measures should be undertaken.
- Find ways to increase the number of dogs licensed in the City.
- Explore ways to reduce dog bites and impounds through public education.
- Control the number of nuisance animals within the City in a humane way.
- Explore viability of Animal Control staff to enter dog license applications.

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8. Revamp Truth-In-Housing Program. (C)

- Move the program from a “Full-Disclosure Program” to a “Full-Disclosure and Hazard Repair Program.”
- Restructure the administration of the program.
- Ensure that the Truth-In-Housing Program is connected to Amanda for noted inspection deficiencies.
- Establish a more rigorous Truth-In-Housing Inspector training program.
- Require hazard repair stemming from the Truth-In-Housing Inspection Report.

Critical Success Factors: *How Will We Know If We Are Successful?*

- Reduce the number of structural fires annually.
- Decrease the number of vacant buildings over a five-year period.
- Reduce the number of construction “no permit” violations over a five-year period.
- Increase the percentage of final construction inspections annually.
- Decrease the number of nuisance complaints for licensed establishments on an annual basis.
- Decrease the number of buildings demolished in the next ten years.

Note: Supports City Goal #2: Safe Streets and Safe Homes.

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Goal #3: Stress Citizen Education and Communication

DSI's Strategies:

1. Rejuvenate the Information and Complaint function in the City of Saint Paul. (A)

- Provide education and orientation for **all** staff allocated to the function so they can be successful.
- Connect those who take the calls to those who respond to the calls.
- Begin to analyze the information collected to determine trends and issues to be dealt with in the City.
- Compile more reliable feedback **to improve service**, e.g., overall response rate for departments regarding information requests or complaints.
- Establish a standard, “intake” protocol for the function.

2. Improve customer service throughout all of DSI. (A)

- Set clear expectations and model the behavior desired.
- Promote customer service as a primary value for the organization.
- Clarify e-mail and voice mail protocols for the Department.
- Improve customer service by identifying bilingual staff to provide interpretive services to a diverse customer base.
- Eliminate redundancy, e.g., having customer fill out form that is then entered into the electronic system by front counter staff.
- Increase DSI's effort to produce a user-friendly website that includes handouts most often used and a logical listing for documents and forms.
- Require subject content experts to update Website, forms, and handouts periodically.
- Review current forms in use and streamline forms where it makes sense to do so and include those who know processes and procedures.
- Establish a standard complaint intake protocol for all divisions.

3. Educate neighborhoods and the public about various DSI program requirements. (B)

- Be aware that every contact is an opportunity to educate.
- Maintain the one-on-one contact in the inspection process.
- Be ready to provide advice and **refer staff to appropriate department if** the request is not related to DSI's primary role and work.
- Connect homeowners and employees through Home Improvement Fairs, District Councils, School Job Fairs, and other such avenues.
- Seek compliance through education.
- Continue to involve renter/tenants in the process.

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4. Increase communication and access to information. (C)

- Expand and update the DSI Website to include all functions of DSI.
 - Refrain from eliminating forms that are used infrequently because they are still used.
 - Organize data on web logically. Examples: Smoke detector handouts should be under “S” not under “H” for hard-wired smoke detectors or data on decks should be under “D” not “P” for pre-engineered decks.
 - Eliminate the “automatic” closing of projects/inspections when a final inspection has not been done.
 - Make it easier for customers to find who to contact and how to reach them.
- Update inspector handouts as it related to overall sustainability of property.
- Ensure a divisional “expert of the day” is available for customer inquiries.

Critical Success Factors: *How Will We Know If We Are Successful?*

- Reduce the number of deficiencies/violations per inspection through education.
- Reduce the number of reinspections necessary.
- Reduce repeat violations annually.
- Increase the percentage of final inspections on construction permits annually.
- Measure customer satisfaction through various methods specific to each Division.
- Increase access to information and services through the DSI Website, one-on-one contacts, and handouts.

Note: Supports City Goal #1: Ready for School, Ready for Life

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Goal #4: Promote Sustainable Urban Living

DSI's Strategies:

1. Review the Property Maintenance Ordinance (#34) and Nuisance Code (#45) based on health and safety justification. (C)

- Address odor issues under the Nuisance Code.
- Decide what other health and safety issues should be addressed.
- Compare national code standards with City's Ordinances to determine if changes should be adopted.

2. Preserve the quality and extend alley longevity. (C)

- Improve regulation and efficiency in trash hauling.
- Reduce the 15,000 alley complaints received each year.

3. Find ways to strengthen restaurant and grocery inspections. (A)

- Bring inspectors together to gain a basic understanding of various code requirements.
- Do review of the due-process procedures throughout the various codes.
- Develop multiple administrative penalty matrices to gain compliance.

4. Resolve animal control issues in the City. (B)

- Find new solutions to continuing issues, e.g., dogs, pigeons, etc.
- Explore the possibility of a consent compliance process, e.g., reduced license fee for licensing a pet.
- Educate the public at every opportunity regarding animal control issues.

5. Review ordinances to determine if they promote environmental stewardship and coordinated relationships with other regulatory agencies, e.g., watershed districts.

Critical Success Factors: How Will We Know If We Are Successful?

- Increase the number of proactive inspections regarding alleys and decrease the number of citizen complaints.
- Reduce the number of dog bites and increase impounds annually through education.
- Increase the number of dogs licensed by ten percent annually.
- Reduce the number of repeat Food Code violations over the next twelve months.
- Reduce the number of Food Code violations over the next three years.

Note: Supports City Goal #4: Communities = Healthy Living.

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Goal #5: Enhance the Spirit of Our City

DSI's Strategies:

1. Increase the vibrancy of the City through access and flexibility. (C)

- Balance neighborhood concerns with vibrancy issues.
- Review applicable codes and make changes to improve business viability, e.g., street furniture, vendors selling goods, street artists, and musicians.
- Use noise variance to promote festivals and events.
- Educate vendors about code requirements to support food events and festivals.
- Explore ways to limit trash collection hours.

Critical Success Factors: *How Will We Know If We Are Successful?*

- Increase in overall number of City events in entire City.

Note: Supports City Goal #6: The Soul of the City.

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Transition Goals and Strategies
(Merging DSI Functions and Making the Transition Successful)

Goal #6: Unify DSI Systems and Structure

DSI's Strategies:

1. Devise one computer system all DSI staff use in a consistent manner. (A)

- Conduct an analysis of the current Amanda system.
 - How is it used?
 - Who uses the system?
 - What is the system primarily used for?
 - To what extent is the captured information accurate, timely, and useful?
- Involve system users in identifying the business needs and designing appropriate computer system solutions and improvements.
- Develop protocols for how the system is to be used?
- Look to see what enhancements could be made to the system to make it more helpful and useful.
- Combine multiple existing systems into one system.
- Promote training and re-training which allows staff to access information available in Amanda.
- Encourage use of existing technology and train DSI staff, e.g., GISmo and pictometry.

2. Develop better information-sharing processes between DSI functions. (A)

- Develop a communication plan for the transition process.
- Promote consistent, information-sharing by Senior Managers.
- Determine what information needs to be shared and the best method for sharing that information, e.g., Amanda, e-mails, etc.
- Create a DSI phone directory outlining correct phone numbers and contacts.
- Provide an improved phone system for all of DSI.
- Increase communications throughout DSI.

3. Clarify organizational structure. (B)

- Set forth an organization chart that lays out structure.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Deal with any turf issue that may arise.
- Provide flow charts and process maps, which show people how processes are connected and their role in the process.
- Determine optimal organizational structure, e.g., functional units, project teams, inspections areas, etc.
- Put inspection district maps on the Intranet.
- Explore combining like functions together, e.g., Plan and Fire Review, permit issuing functions, etc.

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4. Build employee ownership for DSI. (A)

- Clarify individual roles and responsibility.
- Establish DSI's role and responsibility in the City.
- Help employees understand and participate in DSI's Vision, Mission, and Values; help them to become a DSI owner.

5. Build in financial stability for DSI operational functions. (A)

- Update fee schedules for identified functions.
- Include more of the DSI functions in the special fund, e.g., fire protection permits.
- Follow the City's Financial Policy and maintain the recommended fund balance in the special funds.
- Work to match fee collection with enforcement costs.

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**Goal #7: Clarify Operational Standards,
Policies, and Procedures**

DSI Strategies:

1. Conduct a review of DSI policies; identify where policies are needed and where do they need revisions. (B)

- **Establish safety policies that promote employee safety and awareness. (A)**
 - Explore more fully what the primary issues and concerns are.
 - Ramp up safety training for inspectors in the field.
 - Provide in-house training; training to be provided by long-term, seasoned inspection staff.
 - Create clear safety protocols for field staff.
 - Clarify concerns and issues for office staff and how to address those concerns.
 - Request that property and people warnings are easily recognizable when accessing information in Amanda and Stamp.
- **Develop a DSI car usage policy, consistent with City standards. (B)**
 - Assess the current practices in place.
 - Determine what the City policies and standards are.
 - Propose a “Car Usage Policy” for DSI.
- **Set forth uniformed vs. non-uniformed standards. (B)**
 - Determine the rationale for uniforms.
 - Clarify when differences are important and why.
 - Decide what makes the most sense, which may be different standards for different functions.
 - Set forth an appropriate dress code for non-uniformed personnel.

2. Review DSI enforcement legislation and available enforcement tools. (B)

- Conduct a review of all legislation and tools currently used.
- Determine where legislation and tools are consistent, where not consistent, and what makes the most sense to maintain or revise.
- Problem solve the issue of businesses opening without the benefit of licenses or required C of O.

3. Establish unified inspection procedures and protocols. (A)

- Determine where protocols are different or where the commonality is within DSI inspection operations.
- Seek input from staff and determine what the protocols should be; share those with all staff.
- Hold staff accountable for using the revised protocols.
- Share and discuss these procedures and protocols with City Council Members and their staff.
- Inspect based on requirements of the State delegation agreements. Conduct ongoing training for staff, e.g., safety awareness, angry customers, and dangerous dogs.

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Goal #8: Establish DSI Human Resource Systems

DSI Strategies:

1. Develop a Succession and Workforce Planning Program. (B)

- Develop a Succession and Workforce Plan for DSI, including components of the plan, e.g., rotation, training, development, mentoring, etc.
- Implement elements of the Plan once approved.
- Standardize educational credentials, education, and training.

2. Establish appropriate human resource processes that meet organization and staff needs. (B)

- Address employee concerns about staff allocation, work assignments, and compensation.
- Set expectations and accountability for levels of work to be performed.
- Revamp the performance evaluation system.
- Re-visit the issue of titles/job series to do the work the organization requires.
- Establish career path options for DSI employees.
- Look at comparable worth issues related to the work performed.
- Provide cross-training for identified tasks and assignments.
- Assess staffing levels within Divisions and allocate according to the workload.

3. Establish a department-wide training and development program. (A)

- Identify training and development needs for all staff.
- Provide more opportunities for continuing education.
- Conduct awareness training for inspectors regarding a variety of subjects, e.g., historic preservation, zoning, soil erosion, restaurant inspection, building inspection, fire inspection, vacant buildings, graffiti, complaint handling, etc.
- Establish expectations and train staff to report code violations outside of their area of expertise, including vacant building and graffiti locations. Provide easy-to-report protocols for staff to use.
- Establish an orientation program for new employees or employees new to a DSI function.
- Provide cross-training for all staff to allow them to provide better customer service.
- Develop “Procedures Manuals” for identified functions or positions.

4. Establish an employee recognition program. (B)

- Define the components of the program, both formal and informal.
- Determine what is to be recognized and how.
- Utilize staff feedback to develop an employee recognition program.

5. Find ways to celebrate our accomplishments and achievements. (B)

- Define the difference between recognition and celebration.
- Determine who is responsible for celebration of achievements.

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Goal #9: Promote Technology Solutions

DSI's Strategies:

1. Use appropriate, new technology as needed. (B)

- Ensure new technology is user-friendly and appropriate to meet the business needs.
- Look for technology applications that are intuitive.
- Explore use of field units for all divisions.
- Assess the need for “real time” data access in the field.
- Allocate field units to those who need them.
- Explore problems with e-mail system, e.g., delayed data receipt.
- Re-think how information is used and develop new technology solutions to meet those needs.

2. Increase the use of remote field units. (B)

- Ensure the remote system has two-way capability.
- Find easier, more user-friendly ways to input and retrieve information.
- Expect all staff to use the system on a routine basis.

3. Update radios and the phone systems. (B)

- Meet the needs of staff to be in immediate contact with others.
- Address any concerns that may affect customers when doing the upgrades.
- Look at eliminating pagers versus phone access.

4. Foster online approaches. (C)

- Continue the work already begun related to online features.
- Learn from our past experiences of what works and doesn't work.
- Use online approaches to address both staff and customer issues.

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Goal #10: Address Co-Location Issues

DSI's Strategies:

- 1. Design the new “house” with a large footprint to accommodate DSI needs. (A)**
 - Ensure adequate parking is available for customers and staff.
 - Take into account the need to be on public transportation and bike routes.
 - Ensure that the new DSI location is a green, conservation-friendly building.
 - Provide necessary safety and security for customers and staff.
 - Ensure sensible work flow for the office and field operations.
 - Use process mapping to determine appropriate physical layout.

Critical Success Factors: (Goals #6-10) *How Will We Know If We Are Successful?*

- Complete 75% of the tasks contained in the Implementation Plan within one year.

Legend:

- **A Priority** = An immediate and important priority for long-term viability.
- **B Priority** = Needed to establish a strong foundation and is not immediate.
- **C Priority** = Nice to do at a later time; seen as an enhancement.

Draft Adopted by: DSI Senior Management Team May 23, 2007

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